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SUBJECT: GHANA'S ELECTIONS: AN NPP PARTISAN TAKES AIM AT  
THE NPP

Classified By: Poloff Gary Pergl for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Dr. Kwesi Aning, a researcher at Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), told PolOff that post-election violence could still take place if the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) perceives that it is losing the election. He expects the elections to be free and fair, and predicted that a runoff will be necessary. He called narcotics trafficking the biggest problem facing Ghana, accused President Kufuor and the NPP of widespread corruption, alleged that Kufuor and NPP presidential candidate Nana Akufo-Addo have a deep-seated antipathy for each other, and stated that as many as 700,000 small arms and light weapons are in the hands of Ghanaians, presenting a significantly higher threat to national security than is generally perceived. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) After hearing him speak in dire tones about the threat of violence during Ghana's upcoming elections at a forum sponsored by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD), PolOff decided to call on Dr. Kwesi Aning, the head of the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Department (CPMRD) at the KAIPTC. Aning holds a doctorate degree from the University of Copenhagen, where he spent 20 years teaching before moving to Addis Ababa to work with the African Union on defense and security policy. A Google of Aning shows that he is a widely-published academic on subjects of African security and counter-terrorism.

¶3. (C) Aning began the conversation by admitting that he is affiliated with the NPP, that he is in fact an advisor to Akufo-Addo, whose record on human rights in Ghana he admires, and that the glasses he wears are a result of beatings received during the years of Jerry Rawlings' military regime. Despite his NPP leanings, he said, he had been disillusioned by the party's corruption, in particular the involvement of members of the current government in the growing narcotics trafficking in Ghana. He claimed that the drug trade, if not brought under control in the next five years, threatens to destabilize Ghana. He said that trafficking reaches into all sectors of the government, including high levels of the judiciary, which is complicit in allowing those involved in the drug trade to escape any punitive action. He discussed several high-level officials who have been involved in drug trafficking, including NPP MP Kennedy Agyapong, current Kufuor Chief of Staff Kwadwo Mpiani, Akufo-Addo's brother-in-law Raymond Amankwah (who was arrested in May in Brazil for trafficking), and Assistant Commissioner of Police Kofi Boakye (on administrative leave from his position and still pending trial).

¶4. (C) Because of the NPP's high levels of corruption and involvement with movements of illicit drugs in Ghana, Aning believes that the NPP "can't accept a loss in the election," and that it will go to great lengths to prevent a victory by the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Aning admitted that the transparent election process makes it difficult to steal

votes, and predicted that the NPP would rather "cause commotion" after the election, intimidate, and make ballots disappear. (NOTE: Embassy finds this scenario lacks credibility, and when pressed to elaborate, Aning could not provide more specifics. END NOTE)

15. (C) Although Aning says he is a close advisor and friend of Akufo-Addo, he feels that the NPP presidential campaign has been disastrous, and would result in a close election that could be won by the NDC. Akufo-Addo's biggest problem, said Aning, is that he is an Akyem, he can't speak Twi without stumbling, and has to be coached in the local language. He speaks eloquent English and can delineate social policies with great finesse, Aning said, but that is of no use on the hustings away from Accra. Aning advised him to wear traditional dress in the countless billboards that dot the countryside with his image, but Akufo-Addo insisted that western clothes (a navy-blue suit and red tie) made him look more presidential, a move that Aning insists is costing him votes.

16. (C) Aning stated that "Nana and Kufuor may salute for the cameras, but they can barely stand to be in the same room with each other." Kufuor has campaigned for Akufo-Addo just three times, and absent the Rawlings factor, wouldn't mind seeing him lose. Aning said that the breach dates back to 2000, when Akufo-Addo thought he was destined to become the NPP's candidate, and felt that the upstart Kufuor had stolen the nomination from him. Despite the antipathy, Akufo-Addo campaigns on a slogan of "moving forward" as a continuation of Kufuor's policies, a tactic which Aning thinks is backfiring. He said that he had urged Akufo-Addo to adopt

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"New Hope for Ghana" as his campaign theme, and to distance himself from Kufuor. Although Akufo-Addo has surrounded himself publicly with NPP stalwarts and former ministers such as Alan Kyeremating, Hackman Owusu-Agyemang, Jake Obetsebi-Lampitey, and Kofi Apraku, his closest advisors, Aning claims, come from his own family and clan. (If Akufo-Addo wins the election, Aning says, none of those NPP luminaries will have a place in his cabinet.)

17. (C) As a final example of the NPP's feckless campaign, Aning pointed to the constituency of Teshie, where KAIPTC is located. The incumbent NPP candidate for MP, Dr. Gladys Norly-Ashitey, had set up several campaign events, and then failed to appear at the rallies. She is highly unpopular in the area, and won by just 43 votes in the last election. When Akufo Addo appeared with her at a campaign stop there, she was jeered and Akufo Addo was excoriated by the crowd for lack of services, bad roads, and the fetid Teshie lagoon. "He hadn't done his homework," Aning said, "and he paid the price."

18. (C) Aning still supports Akufo-Addo, saying he is a man with strong feelings about human rights who deeply wants to help the Ghanaian people. He seemed to separate Akufo-Addo from the Kufuor administration's reputation for corruption, saying that Akufo-Addo was a wealthy man before entering government service and didn't need any more money. He said that Akufo-Addo was driven more by a sense of history and a need to uphold the family name (his father had been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and also President of Ghana from 1972-74). When asked about rumors of Akufo-Addo's cocaine use, Aning admitted that Akufo-Addo had used drugs in his younger days, but that was now "under control." He added cryptically that "you can check with German intelligence on that."

19. (U) Aning thought the election would be close, because even though the NPP has a huge cash advantage over the NDC, the NDC campaign has been tight and focused, and Atta-Mills knows exactly where to go after the votes he needs. He said that the NDC had also done an excellent job in choosing where to deploy Jerry Rawlings and its vice-presidential candidate

John Mahama.

¶9. (C) Finally, when asked about his assertion at the CDD forum that weapons caches were proliferating in the northern regions of Ghana, Aning contended that the number of small arms and light weapons was vastly underestimated. He gave PolOff a paper he had published in the April 2008 edition of The Journal of Contemporary African Studies, in which he estimates that as many as 700,000 firearms are in civilian hands. He claims that Ghana's National Firearms Bureau legally registered 400,000 guns from 1955-2004. Aning said that the threat presented by these small arms was significant, especially in the North, where rumors abound of stockpiling by both sides in Chieftancy disputes which could rise to the surface during elections. Aning also noted a recent increase in armed robberies and violent crimes in Ghana. (NOTE: Official Ghanaian estimates are 40,000 illicit small arms in the country. Aning's figures seem to be considerably exaggerated. END NOTE.)

¶10. (C) COMMENT: Aning has a reputation as a no-nonsense academic who steers an independent course. In his conversation with Poloff, he toned down considerably the fears he had expressed at the CDD forum concerning widespread post-election violence. Going contrary to popular belief that the NDC would likely be the instigator of any election violence, Aning instead surmised that only the NPP would resort to hostilities in the face of a pending election loss. When asked why he assumed the election would require a run-off, like most political observers, Aning had little concrete evidence besides his gut feeling from "discussions around the country."  
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